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THE
HOUSE OF GOD OPENED

AND HIS
TABLE FREE

FOR
BAPTISTS AND PÆDOBAPTISTS,

WHO ARE
SAINTS and FAITHFUL in CHRIST.

OR,
REASONS

Why their different Sentiments about WATER
BAPTISM should be no Bar to Church
Fellowship with each other.

The principal OBJECTIONS answered.

ALSO
AN ILLUSTRATIVE DIALOGUE
AND AN
INCIDENTAL NARRATIVE.

Colos. iii. xiv. — *Above all these Things put on Charity, which
is the Bond of Perfection.*

1 John iii. 18. — *Let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue,
but in Deed and in Truth.*

By JOHN BROWN.

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MDCCLXXV.

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Why their different
BAPTISM is not to Church
Fellowship be admitted.
The principal OBJECTIONS answered.
ALSO
AN ILLUSTRATIVE DIALOGUE
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INCIDENTAL NARRATIVE.



Col. iii. xiv. — There are three things you are charged, which
is the Bond of Perfection.
John iii. 18. — Let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue,
but in Deed and in Truth.

By JOHN BROWN.

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M.DCC.LXXII.

P R E F A C E.

IT is a very desirable, and will be a happy, time, Isa. xi. 13. when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. When the two sticks shall be Ezek. xxxvii. 19. made one, then will be rolled away the great reproach of Christianity; as all the churches will be perfectly 1 Cor. i. 10. joined together in the same mind and in the same Zeph. iii. 9. judgement, and serve the Lord with one consent. We might hope this happy time was near approaching, if all the saints and faithful in Christ were endeavour- Eph. iv. 3. ing to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of Eph. v. 2. peace, and were walking together in love, without insisting upon an exact uniformity in mere external modes of worship, which are not essential either to the being of a Christian or of a true church of Christ. Is it not strange, that those, who plead for and enjoy liberty of conscience, should be unwilling to allow their Christian brethren to sit at the Lord's Table with them, unless they submit to a different mode of Baptism to what they believe is right?

It is true, Pædobaptists, in general, shew their Christian charity in allowing liberty of conscience, and freely admitting Baptists, whom they judge to be saints and faithful, into Communion with them: and some of the Baptists too are of the same truly catholic spirit: such only as have adopted and go by the name of strict Baptists, barricade the doors of their churches, and insist on an uniformity in the outward mode of Baptism as a term of admission into fellowship with them.

Rom. xiv. 3, 4.
10, 13, 15.
1 Tim. vi. 4.
2 Cor. xiii. 20.

The dishonourable progeny of a narrow, rigid, and bigotted, party-spirit, are pride, envy, anger, hatred, wrath, strifes, and divisions: such as are under its influence readily judge, despise, set at nought, and walk uncharitably with, such brethren whose judgments differ from them in matters of small moment.

Gal. v. 22, 23.
Col. iii. 12, 13.
Eph. iv. 2, 3.
Eph. i. 15.
Col. i. 4.

But the spirit of Christ breathes love, kindness, humbleness of mind, gentleness, meekness, long suffering, and a forbearing one another in love. The following thoughts are made public, in hopes they may be a happy means of cooling unseemly fiery zeal, and of softening severe brethren into love and unity with all saints. And let every anonymous Zoilus or Momus expect pity, with just and silent contempt.

PRELIMINARY



PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

I. **I**F we may have ground to believe, that any are called to be saints, and faithful in Christ, who are so weak as to deny Water-Baptism to be a continued ordinance of Christ, it is to no purpose to ask whether such may be admitted into the Church and to the Table without Baptism; as they deny also the Lord's-Supper and the order and discipline of the Church, and consequently will not desire or request admittance either into a Church of Christ or to his table: and surely no one ought to be admitted into such a free society as a Church of Christ without his own voluntary desire and choice.

II. No plea can be made for the admittance of any, who know and believe Water-Baptism to be an ordinance of Christ, and yet are unwilling to answer a good conscience, by being found in the practice of it, as they apprehend it, according to the mind of Christ. For any one, who wittingly and willingly lives in the neglect of this ordinance, is unworthy of a place in the House of God, or at his Table. As to him that knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin against light, of an aggravated nature, and it would be suffering sin upon him, to admit him in the neglect of a known duty.

III. But the question is, whether or not the House of God should be open, and his Table free, for saints and brethren in Christ, who believe and profess Water-Baptism to be an ordinance of Christ, and have been baptized in the mode they think is right,

though it may be different from the judgements of their brethren whom they desire communion with. Or, supposing some think, that professing believers are the only proper subjects for Baptism, and immersion, or dipping the whole body in water, to be the only proper mode of it: and others think, that infants, at least, such as have believing parents, are also proper subjects for Baptism; and that pouring or sprinkling of water is a proper mode. Whether these persons, of such different sentiments about this external ordinance of Baptism, may enjoy Church Fellowship with each other, and sit together at the Lord's Table? I cannot help thinking that the following Reasons sufficiently evince, that this difference in judgement should not prevent mutual love, union, and communion, with each other, in the House of God and at his Table,

REASONS,

REASONS, &c.

I. **A**S all, who are called to be saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, whether they be Baptists or Pædobaptists, are in the same near relation to God, as their heavenly Father, and so are brethren; — are all equally beloved of him, as his dear children; — born in his house and of his household; and as he hath promised and gives them all a place and a name in his house, better than of sons and daughters, an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off; and also as, in all places where he records his name, though only two or three are gathered together, he affords them his gracious presence and blessing; therefore, as brethren, it is good and pleasant for them to dwell together in love and unity, and not to fall out by the way, or attempt to deprive each other of the common privileges of their Father's house, or the means of enjoying his presence, by shutting the door, and keeping them from his Table.

Rom. i. 7.
Eph. iv. 6.
Psal. lxxxvii.
5, 6.
Eph. ii. 19.
Isa. lvi. 5, 6, 7.

Exod. xx. 24.
Mat. xviii. 20.
Psal. cxxxiii. 1.
Gen. xlv. 24.

II. As they have all obtained the like precious faith, and are called in one body, so are one in Christ, members of his mystical body, in which there should be no schism, even those members which to us seem feeble, unnecessary, less honourable, and unlovely, should not be severed from the body, as useless, or as not belonging to it, but be loved, cared for, and sympathized with: and as the Lord's Supper is peculiarly designed to represent this one body, and to promote

2 Pet. i. 1
Col. iii. xv.
1 Cor. xii. 12 to
28.

1 Cor. x. 17.

love

love and unity in the whole body ; as we are all partakers of the one bread in it ; therefore none of the members of this one body ought to exclude each other from it, though they may be mistaken in things not essential and which do not affect their moral walk.

Gal. vi. 15.
Rom. ii. 28, 29.

III. As Water-Baptism in itself, whether it be administered in infancy or when adult, or by the mode of sprinkling or dipping, makes none a real saint or Christian, or renders any proper subjects for church fellowship : but as those, who are baptized by the one spirit in regeneration, are made real saints and Christians thereby, and are all baptized into the one body, (the true mystical Church of Christ,) and are all made to drink into one spirit, and also have truly fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit, and in the Gospel ; therefore such ought not to be refused fellowship with the saints, at the Table of the Lord, let their sentiments and practice about Water-Baptism be what they may.

1 Cor. xii. 13.

1 John i. 3.
Phil. i. 5.

1 Pet. iii. xxi.
Psal. i. 3.

Job. xix. 28.

Rom. xiv. 15,
16, 17, 18, 19,
20.

IV. As Water-Baptism is only a figure or shadow, an outward sign, or one leaf of our profession, therefore we ought not to refuse or reject the substance for the sign or shadow ; the kernel for the outward shell ; the fruit, or root of the matter, for a defect in one leaf ; and destroy the peace and edification of brethren who have the blessing and root of the matter in them ; as we know that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, *or water*, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and he that, in these things, serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and should be approved of by us, and not kept out of the House of God and from his Table.

Acts ii. 41.

V. As Water-Baptism is an ordinance and personal duty out of the church, which principally concerns the party baptized, as to the right and mode of administration ; and as those who are of a different mind are

are not obliged to join in, or even be present at, the administration of it, contrary to their own consciences, but each one, apart by himself, or with such as are of the same mind, may strictly discharge what he apprehends his own duty therein: Who then art thou that judgest another's household servant? (as the original word signifies.) For God is his only master; to him he standeth or falleth, or is accountable for his conduct herein: and, though he may be mistaken, yet, if the master of the house hath received him as one of the household, none of the rest of the servants should judge him, or put a stumbling-block, or occasion to fall, in his brother's way; much less shut him out of his master's house and from his table, which is an ordinance and social duty, and privilege in the church, for all his servants, for their edification.

Rom. xiv. 4j

10, 13.

1 Cor. xi. 20,

23.

VI. The time of uniformity amongst the children of God and servants of Christ, in things not essential to salvation, is not yet come: and till then, it seems, the great Head of the church is pleased to permit different sentiments to take place in non-essentials, for the greater trial and exercise of true Christian charity, long suffering, and forbearance, amongst his people; which an exact uniformity might prevent; therefore it should not be insisted on as a term for fellowship in the churches of Christ.

VII. An uniformity in the mode of Water-Baptism is not essential to a true church of Christ, or the foundation of true Christian love amongst brethren: for societies may be formed on an uniformity in the outward mode of this ordinance, and yet not be true churches of Christ, nor have any true Christian love subsisting amongst them: and there certainly are many true churches of Christ, whose members are knit together in true Christian love, and enjoying the presence of Christ amongst them, though of different sentiments about

about the mode of Water-Baptism: therefore such a difference should be no bar to fellowship amongst the churches of Christ.

VIII. The Lord Jesus, as the great and good shepherd of his flock, the church, hath pronounced, that he who entereth in by him, as the door, shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. And all the saints and faithful in Christ have thus entered in, and have a right to this promise: therefore all pastors, who are after Christ's heart, should feed them with knowledge and understanding, and not scatter or drive them away, or hinder them from enjoying the sweet and green pastures Christ hath provided for them. Against such a woe is pronounced, who do scatter and drive them away.

IX. The new royal law of the King of saints is, that they love one another as he hath loved them; that they also love one another: and it is the distinguishing character by which we may not only know, but all men may know, we are his disciples, if we have love one to another. Love not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. As, therefore, the many weaknesses and mistakes of his people did not, nor do now, hinder his love and presence with them, neither should they hinder us from loving and walking in love with them. But how contrary is it to our duty to shut them out of his house and from his Table?

X. The apostolic rules are, for us to receive the weak in faith; to bear their infirmities; to receive one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God: rules enforced by the example of Christ, who receives the weak as well as the strong, and bears with the infirmities of his people and churches: the bruised reed he did not break, and smoking flax he did not quench. Though he had many things against the Asiatic churches, yet he owned them as his, and walked

walked in the midst of them; and he still does with all such as hold him as their head, the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, the ordinances in substance, and whose conversations are according to godliness, though there may be many weaknesses and mistakes amongst them: the thought of which should allay bigotted party-spirit among real Christians, and engage them to walk together with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love. Eph. iv. 2.

XI. The apostolic practice was, to allow liberty of conscience, and to exercise great forbearance towards brethren, who, through weakness and education-principles, were mistaken in things of as great moment as the outward mode of Water-Baptism; not refusing fellowship with those who were zealously attached to some of the abolished rites of the ceremonial law, and the customs of the elders, particularly circumcision, the Jewish Sabbath and fasts, meats and drinks, and divers washings, and also purification in the Temple for the vow of the Nazarite. Gal. iv. 9, 10. Heb. ix. 10.

Yea, the great apostle Paul circumcised Timothy, took upon him the Nazarite's vow, shaved his head at Cenchrea, and also says, Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law: to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law: to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. The main concern of the apostle was, to gain souls to the saving knowledge of Christ; without which all outward forms will be of no avail. Things indifferent were indifferent to him. Thus should it

be with all the ministers of Christ; promoting love and unity among all saints, though of different sentiments about some mere outward forms.

XII. The members of the church at Philippi were *Phil. iii. 15, 16.* of different sentiments about things not essential to salvation: they had not all attained the same degree of light and knowledge of divine things; and yet, must they walk together in the ordinances of God's house? Yes: the apostle says, Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. As if he had said, Let not your different sentiments break Christian love, or hinder you from walking in church fellowship with each other so far as ye are agreed; leaving each other with God, to reveal the truth of those things in which you are differently minded: he is the best instructor, who has led you into the truth; and your refusal to walk together in a church state is not the way to enlighten your brother into the truth.

XIII. The human mind is not to be forced into truth by rigour, but led into it by free enquiry and rational inward conviction: and the exercise of Christian love and forbearance is the most likely means of softening the minds of mistaken brethren, of dissipating their prejudices, of putting them upon a free and impartial enquiry after the truth, and rendering them more susceptible of it. A rigid, censorious, uncharitable, spirit towards brethren, is contrary to the spirit of Christ, and to shut and bar the door against a brother is a strange way of testifying our love to him, or of convincing him of his mistakes.

XIV. There is a vast difference between a person who disbelieves and rejects Water-Baptism as an ordinance of Christ, and one who believes and is found in

it as he really understands it. Nor can it be the duty of any one to submit to a different mode, unless he is persuaded, in his own mind, that the mode he has already submitted to was wrong. For Baptism is the answer of a good conscience towards God, and blind obedience is neither required or acceptable to him. And as a mistaken defect in one duty will not exempt brethren from being found in other important duties, which they have light into, and which are privileges for their edification, neither will it justify any in debaring them from being found in the social duty and privilege of the Lord's Supper. ^{1 Pet. iii. xxi}

XV. Believing Pædobaptists have the same spiritual views of the ordinance of Water-Baptism, and look upon themselves as under the same solemn engagements in their submission to it, in their mode, as the Baptists do in theirs : so that there is an agreement in the substance, though not in the external mode of it : which difference ought not to destroy the comforts of love, the fellowship of the spirit, and the bowels and mercies which the children of God, as his elect, holy and beloved, should put on and exercise towards each other. <sup>Phil. ii. 1.
Col. iii. 12.</sup>

XVI. Believing Pædobaptists walk as honourably in the world towards those who are without, and also in the church, and are as capable of, and as strict in, discharging the sacred duties respecting the Table of the Lord, as the Baptists ; such as examining of themselves, and so eating of that bread and drinking of that cup, discerning the Lord's body, doing it in remembrance of him ; shewing the Lord's death till he come ; and, though many in number, yet partaking of that one Bread, as one Bread and one Body. So that it is unjustifiable to deny them what is the common privilege of the children of God, the Supper of the Lord. <sup>1 Thes. iii. 12.
Col. iv. 5.
1 Cor. xi. 24, 25,
26, 28.
1 Cor. x. 17.</sup>

XVII. If Baptism by immersion had been essentially necessary for constituting a true church of Christ, or for the admission of members into it; or a different mode a sufficient bar to keep a person out of it and from his Table; we might suppose that some of the epistles, to the primitive churches of Christ, would have been at least inscribed, To the baptized church of Christ: and also that the apostles, in giving the characters of the members of the same churches, would sometimes have called them baptized believers or brethren, as well as the beloved of God, the called of Jesus Christ, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, and the saints and faithful brethren in Christ: but, as they are not, surely those persons, who answer the characters given the members of the pure apostolic churches, are fit to be received into any of the churches of Christ in our days; and their being baptized in a different mode, as it is the only bar raised against their admittance, ought to be removed away.

Rom. i. 6, 7.
1 Cor. i. 2.
Eph. i. 1.
Col. i. 2.

XVIII. Supposing the mode of immersion to be right, yet your adopting that unscriptural party-name and distinction, of the baptized churches of Christ, and refusing fellowship with all who do not practise the same, is the ready way to let your good be evil spoken of; as it gives great reason for people to think, you lay too great stress on Baptism by immersion: and also it savours too much of a bigoted party-spirit, which is unfriendly to the life and power of godliness. It is certainly one of the most subtle and successful wiles of Satan, as an angel of light, that he might break brotherly love and unity, and smother vital godliness among the children of God; to set them at variance about the outward forms of Godliness, under the specious pretence of a zeal for God, till they become mere party-bigots to an empty name. As all party-names and distinctions, of human device, tend

Rom. xiv. 16.

Cor. xi. 14.

to divide the churches and children of God, they ought not to be retained; as they are all but one body, and should have fellowship one with another.

XIX. The laws of separation and exclusion from God's House and Table, according to the sacred oracles of truth, extend to the world; to such as con- 2 Cor. vi. 17.
sent not to the doctrine which is according to god- 2 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5.
liness; to those who are destitute of the truth; to the
contentious; to the prophane and disorderly walkers; 2 Theff. iii. 6.
and to the heretic. Amongst whom we cannot rank Titus iii. 10.
sincere, humble and honourable, believers, who walk
conscientiously according to the light God has given
them, though their sentiments are different about
Baptism. Against such there is no law, nor ought Gal. v. 23.
any church or minister to make any.

XX. Lastly, all the saints and faithful in Christ,
both Baptists and Pædobaptists, belong to the gene- Heb. xii. 22, 23.
ral assembly and church of the first-born, which are Rev. xxi. 27.
written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life; and,
as fellow-citizens of Mount Zion, the city of the li- 2 Pet. i. 12.
ving God, the heavenly Jerusalem, they will all have
entrance ministered unto them abundantly into the
everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ, where they will spend a blisful eternity to-
gether in the enjoyment of all the glories thereof,
and join in concert in singing, in the height of Zion,
the high praises of God and the Lamb: the amazing
rapturous thoughts of which should unite all the
saints here in love to, and fellowship with each other,
in the House of God and at his Table.

OBJECTIONS

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

OBJECTION I.

IT is contrary to the commission of Christ, and the order and practice of the primitive apostolic churches of Christ. For such as were first taught were then baptized, and after Baptism were added to the church; and there is neither precept nor precedent of any being received into the church without Baptism.

Mat. xxviii. 19.
Acts ii. 41.

ANSWER. Pædobaptists, agreeable to the commission of Christ, and the order and practice of the primitive apostolic churches, require Baptism before persons are added to the church: and it is no wonder that length of time and the fruitful wits of men have caused different sentiments to take place, among real Christians, about the mode of it. But surely this difference ought not to make us break the royal law of love, and burst the dear bands of Christian brotherhood and fellowship, in the churches of Christ.

We have both precepts and precedents for brethren to exercise charity, long suffering, and forbearance, towards each other, under their weakneses, infirmities, and mistakes; but neither precept nor precedent to exclude them from the House of God and from his Table, unless they are such weakneses and mistakes

as are subversive of the fundamental doctrines of Christ and the moral walk of the Christian.

Where will the strict Baptist find either precept or precedent to receive and retain persons in their churches merely because they agree with them and submit to their mode of Baptism, and yet are unsound in the doctrine of the Trinity and the Sonship of Christ? who embrace the absurd notion of the pre-existence of his human soul; who deny the Christian Sabbath and Christ's purchase of the blessings of grace and glory; that ministers should preach the law; and that it is the duty of unregenerate sinners to pray for spiritual blessings, &c. Such should therefore consider, and cast out the beam out of their own eye, Mat. vii. 34, 35 that they may see clearly to cast out the mote out of their brother's eye.

OBJECTION II. Christ is Lord and Lawgiver in his own house; ministers only servants, who have no right to alter or dispense with this or any other ordinance, but to administer them to such persons and in such modes as he hath appointed.

ANSWER. We claim no right to alter or dispense with this or any ordinance of Christ; but do administer it to such persons and in such a mode as he hath appointed, even to such who answer a good conscience in it, being fully persuaded of their duty therein.

But Christ, as Lord and Lawgiver, hath not given us any right to impose this or any ordinance on any, without their knowledge and choice. You will say, let them wait till they see it their duty in the mode of immersion. Is this thy kindness to thy brother? Because he cannot see to discharge his duty and enjoy a privilege in the same mode you do, to hinder him from doing his duty and enjoying the privileges of his father's house, which he knows to be both his duty and privilege, and the common privilege of the whole household.

household of faith, for their mutual peace, comfort and edification. If such strictness were attended to, how few Christian churches would there be in the world? And the far greater number of God's people would be debarred, all their days, from the privileges of his House and Table, to the great dishonour of Christ and his kingdom, and the real loss of his people, from a want of that very edifying social ordinance of the Supper and discipline of God's House.

OBJECTION III. If we dispense with one ordinance of Christ, we may also with the other, and so lose both Baptism and the Supper too. Such forbearance is far from Christian love, it is suffering sin to rest on our brother.

ANSWER. As before observed, we dispense with neither, but administer Baptism by immersion to such as believe it their duty.

And as all our religious services should be free and not forced, and every man fully persuaded in his own mind, it would be contrary to the spirit of Christianity, to debar conscientious Christians from the liberty and freedom of thinking and judging for themselves in matters of religion, and to exercise forbearance towards them in things not essential. And certainly such forbearance, and walking in Christian love and fellowship with them, must shew more affection towards them than a rigid uncharitable conduct, in shutting them out of God's House and from his Table.

And it is suffering sin to rest on our brother indeed, in hindering him from such duties and privileges he knows and desires to be found in, for his edification and the glory of God, only because he does not see it his duty to submit to the same mode in Baptism as we do. If my brother sees not every shade in colours as I do, must I put out his eyes? Or, if he is lame, must I

I prevent his walking at all in such paths as he can walk? The way to prevent an abuse of Christian forbearance would be, to be careful to admit none but sincere believers into fellowship: such will not want a dispensation from any known duty, but will be for walking in all the commandments and ordinances of Luke i. 61 the Lord blameless.

OBJECTION IV. To admit of mixed communion, is the ready way to make persons set light by and neglect the ordinance of Baptism.

ANSWER. It is an excellent declaration of that great divine, Thomas Goodwin, vol. i. p. 489.

— “ For my part, this I say, and I say it with much
 “ integrity, I never yet took up religion by parties
 “ in the lump: I have found, by trial of things, that
 “ there is some truth on all sides: I have found holi-
 “ ness where you would little think it, and so like-
 “ wise truth: and I have learned this principle,
 “ which I hope I shall never lay down till I am swal-
 “ lowed up of immortality, and that is, to acknow-
 “ ledge every good thing, and hold communion with
 “ it, in men, in churches, or whatsoever else. I
 “ learn this from Paul; I learn this from Jesus Christ
 “ himself: he filleth all in all; he is in the hearts
 “ of his people, and filleth them in his ordinances to
 “ this day; and, where Jesus Christ filleth, why
 “ should we deny an acknowledgement and a right-
 “ hand of fellowship and communion?”

If all the saints acted on the same principles, *viz.*
 “ to acknowledge every good thing, and hold com-
 “ munion with it, in men and in churches,” it would
 be the ready way to provoke to love and good works;
 and, instead of setting light by and neglecting this
 ordinance, to remove prejudices, and engage to an
 impartial enquiry into it, and, when enlightened, to
 be found in it. But setting too high a value on the

D

mode

mode of it, as if essential to a true Church of Christ and salvation, and as a term of communion, is the ready way to make persons set light by it and neglect it, and those persons too who thus abuse it. How unnatural would it be, to disown a brother, to forbid him our father's house and table, and to refuse to walk with him in the king's highway, because he has traced a lonely path I dislike?

OBJECTION V. If Baptists were to admit Pædobaptists into communion with them, they would soon be over-run with them, and so no Baptist churches left, and the ordinance of Baptism lost.

ANSWER. If you have any doubt about the validity of your practice, or think there is not sufficient evidence in the sacred oracles for it, or that God will not maintain it as his own cause, this may be a very formidable objection indeed: but, if you have no doubt about it, your carnal policy will be a poor tottering support to the cause of truth: it wants no such support; nor will it be of the least advantage, but a great detriment to it. If churches are but careful in admitting only real Christians into communion, they need not fear the loss of vital godliness or any ordinance of Christ: for such will be like the noble Bereans, receive the word with all readiness of mind, and search the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.

Acts xvii. 11.

OBJECTION VI. Such a coalition of parties flows either from lukewarmness and indifferency about religion, or a desire after popularity, and worldly motives.

ANSWER. As the same Lord is over all the saints, and rich unto all that call upon him; to walk in love and unity with all such as in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, is so far from shewing lukewarmness and indifferency

Röm. x. 12.
1 Cor. i. 2.

indifferency about religion, that it is the agreeable fruit of godliness, and shews that such are not barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus ^a Pct. i. 7, 8, 9. Christ: but he that lacketh these things (particularly brotherly kindness and charity) is blind, and cannot see far off, through his party bigotted zeal for a mere outward mode, which is no true sign of a zeal for God ^{Rom. x. 1, 2.} according to knowledge.

As to a desire after popularity, and worldly motives, surely they are too mean for any true minister of Christ to be influenced by. Can we suppose the objector is influenced by any such motives, and so raises these severe reflections on his brethren from the secret emotions of his own heart? What can be said of those who do receive and retain persons in fellowship with them, on submitting to their mode of Baptism, who vastly differ from them in points of doctrine of far greater importance than the mode of Baptism, and for which they have neither precept nor precedent of any such being admitted into the primitive apostolic churches of Christ? And it is well if others are not endeavouring to foment a narrow bigoted party-spirit amongst their people, lest they should lose any of those who may have an opportunity of hearing ministers of the gospel of other denominations to their greater comfort and edification. However it may be, such hard censures favour too much of a virulent party-spirit: it would be more agreeable to truth and the spirit of Christ to say, such a coalition of parties flows from an earnest desire to put on and to exercise, above all ^{Col. iii. 14.} things, charity; which is the bond of perfectness, the ^{1 Cor. xiii. 2, 13.} greatest grace; without which we are nothing, though we may be zealous for the best outward modes of religion.

OBJECTION VII. There are churches of their own denomination to which they may join.

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ANSWER,

ANSWER. If there are, that will not justify you in barring them out of your churches, if they have a right of entrance and desire fellowship with you.

But in many places there are not churches of their own denomination that they can, with convenience and comfort, join with; and with what justice can we hinder a brother from his duty and usefulness in the church, and to live in neglect of the social and very edifying ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which he ought often to be found in, because we think he is mistaken about the mode of Baptism, which is only a personal duty out of the church, and only to be once submitted to? The privileges of church fellowship are too valuable to be sacrificed at so cheap a rate. If a brother does not rightly understand every part of his father's will and know every legacy in it, should he be deprived of all the rights and privileges his father has left him? Or because he will not receive and enjoy one in the way I think his father would have had him, must I keep him out of his house and deprive him of all his father hath left him? Any one may see how unjust and cruel such conduct would be,

amongst their people, lest they should lose any of those who may have an opportunity of hearing ministers of the gospel of other denominations to their greater comfort and edification. However it may be, such hard sentences as our too much of a virtuous party might be more agreeable to men, and the spirit of

to say, such a coalition of parties flows from a selfish desire to put on and to exercise, above all things, charity; which is the bond of perfectness, the greatest grace; without which we are nothing; though we may be xelous for the best outward modes of reli-

gion. SECTION VII. There are churches of their own denomination to which they may join.

ANSWER.

A N

ILLUSTRATIVE DIALOGUE.

BENAIHAH and SEMEI were brethren equally beloved of their father, who determined to make them joint heirs of all he had ; nor could it be known 1 Cor. iii, 21. which of them loved their father most, or were most willing to obey him in all things. Business obliges their father to leave them awhile ; and he gave them this charge and rule, that they should live together in love, and not fall out or vex one another by the way ; and that they should be washed before they sit together at his table to eat bread. Both of them, in love and duty to their dear father, chearfully obeyed his rule as they really understood it. Benaiah understood that his father's rule was, to have his whole body washed : Semei, that his father only intended the washing of his face with his hands.

Benaiah is very angry with his brother, and chides him much, because he did not understand and practise his father's rule about washing in the same mode or manner he did.

Semei says, dear brother, why are you so angry with me ? For I have as great a love to my father, and am as obedient to his rule, as you ; for I have

have been washed as I firmly believe our father commanded us.

Benaiah said, very warmly, you have not; and, if you will not be washed as I have been, you shall not sit at my father's table with me, nor will I suffer you to enter his house; for I will shut the door upon you, and you shall have no privilege there as my brother.

[*Hastily shuts the door.*]

Semei cries out, my dear brother, be not so hot, nor deal so harshly with me: for, though you are not washed in the same mode or manner I am, (which I believe is agreeable to our father's rule,) yet I am not so angry with you, but am willing to dwell in my father's house and sit at his table with you, and why should not you with me? Let there be no strife between us, for we are brethren; and how good and pleasant is it for brethren to dwell together in unity? So pray open the door, let me in, and let us live together in love and at peace.

Gen. xiii. 8.

Psal. cxxxi. 1.

Ben. I will not open the door; you shall not come in, nor sit at my father's table with me, unless you will be washed in the mode I have been, according to the rule of our father.

Sem. This is hard usage indeed from a brother; as, to the best of my knowledge, I have obeyed the rule of my father in washing; but, unless I will also obey you, and be washed in the mode you would have me, you will not permit me to sit with you at my father's table, nor to enter his house, but shut the door against me, and not let me enjoy any privilege there. Such unbecoming behaviour as this will not convince me, if I have mistaken my father's rule in washing: your unkind treatment of me thus is without any rule of my father's; he never ordered you to exclude me from his house and table, if I did not rightly understand his rule in washing, or was not washed in the mode you

you have been. If I am wrong in my mode of washing, I am sure you are wrong in using me thus; for you know how strictly our dear father charged us to live together in love, and not to fall out by the way; Gen. xlv. 24; so pray open the door and let me come in.

Ben. I will open the door and let you in, if you will but obey our father in being washed in the same mode which I have been.

Sem. When my father is pleased to let me know I have mistaken the rule he left with us, and that your mode of worship is his will, I then will be obedient; but, till then, if I were to submit to it, I should only be obeying you and not my father; and you have no authority to command my obedience to you herein. And I am sure, if I have not rightly understood my father's rule in washing, as he would know it is not out of stubbornness, or from a want of love and a readiness to obey him in all things, he would not have shut me out of his house and from his table on the account of it, but, as an affectionate and indulgent parent, own and receive me as his son, and be the more tender and careful in instructing me: and you, as a brother, would pity my weakness, and receive me as a brother, and be tender of me, and not usurp an authority over me, under a pretence of my not obeying the rule of my father in washing, so as to keep me out of his house and from his table. For he gave you no such orders, but strictly charged us to live together in his house in love and at peace till he came again: so let us be obedient to our father, and let all discord Prov. vi. 19; cease between us.

Ben. I will strictly attend to my father's rule in washing; and, when you are washed as I am, I will let you in and not before.

Sem. I have as strictly attended to my father's rule in washing, I believe, as you have; and our father
has

Isa. xi. 13.
1 Pet. iii. 8.
Eph. v. 2.

has left no such rule for you to exclude me from his house and table, if I would not be washed as you have been: and your assuming such a lordly power in my father's house, and over me your brother, and enacting without his authority such a law of exclusion, and putting it into execution against me, so as to keep me out of his house and from enjoying any privileges there, must certainly be highly displeasing to him, whose orders were, that we should not envy or vex one another, but love as brethren and walk in love. So seriously consider what you are doing against me, and how you will answer for treating me thus to our father, when he comes again.

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A N

INCIDENTAL NARRATIVE.

AN eminent Pædobaptist Minister of the Gospel, going a journey, rested on the Lord's day in a town where he had been long acquainted with a Baptist minister and his people, and amongst whom he had often preached with great acceptance. Through their earnest solicitations he preached to them in the morning, and engaged to preach again in the evening. After morning service they declared how greatly they were comforted and edified under his ministry; that he had fed them with the finest of the wheat, with savoury meat, such as their souls loved. As the Pædobaptist minister was in a lively frame, finding his heart knit to the people, and that they were to enjoy the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper that afternoon, he was desirous of enjoying occasional Communion with them at the Table of the Lord, and expressed his desire that they would grant him liberty to do so. Both minister and people seemed struck with his desire and request, and hesitated about it. At last they answered him, they could not comply with his request, as it was contrary to their order as a church; for they admitted none into Communion

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with them but such as were baptized by immersion. What! says the Pædobaptist minister, must I feed you so agreeably as you have declared this morning, and again hold forth the word of life, and preach Christ to you, as the food of your souls, this evening, and yet you will not grant me liberty to eat bread with you at his Table, though I believe I am rightly baptized as well as you? If such rigid order be agreeable to my Lord's will I am greatly mistaken: see ye to it, how you will answer it another day.

To conclude, as strict Baptists freely admit Pædobaptist ministers into their pulpits to preach the everlasting Gospel, and express the highest satisfaction with their ministry, thereby owning their gifts and call from Christ to the highest office in the church, it must therefore be very inconsistent not to admit them to enjoy the common privilege of the meanest member in the house of God.

Let the reader attend to the following queries, and every rigid strict Baptist determine impartially as to the impropriety of his conduct.

Rom. xiv. 1, 2, 3.

QUERY I.

Does not Paul mean, by *receiving*, in Romans, receiving into the Church? as the Syriac version is, give the hand to him that is weak; a form used in receiving of members.

QUERY II.

Was not God's receiving the rule for the Romans to go by in receiving members into the church?

QUERY III.

Is not the same rule (a command of the inspired apostle for the admission of members) in force now, as well as in the apostolic age?

QUERY

QUERY IV.

Does not Paul's reasoning prove that no weakness of faith, but such as evidence God hath not received a person, is a sufficient bar to church communion.

QUERY V.

Many Pædobaptists, by their principles, temper and conduct, appear to be such as God hath received, notwithstanding their mistakes about Baptism. Are we not therefore commanded to receive them, because God hath received them?

QUERY VI.

Is not as much required in order to an office in the church as to private membership?

QUERY VII.

Is it not as inconsistent to receive a Pædobaptist, as a minister, and admit him into the pulpit, as to admit him into the church and to the Lord's table?

QUERY VIII.

Where have you either precept or example for receiving them as ministers, and into your pulpits, any more than for receiving them as members?

FINIS.